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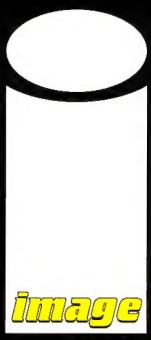
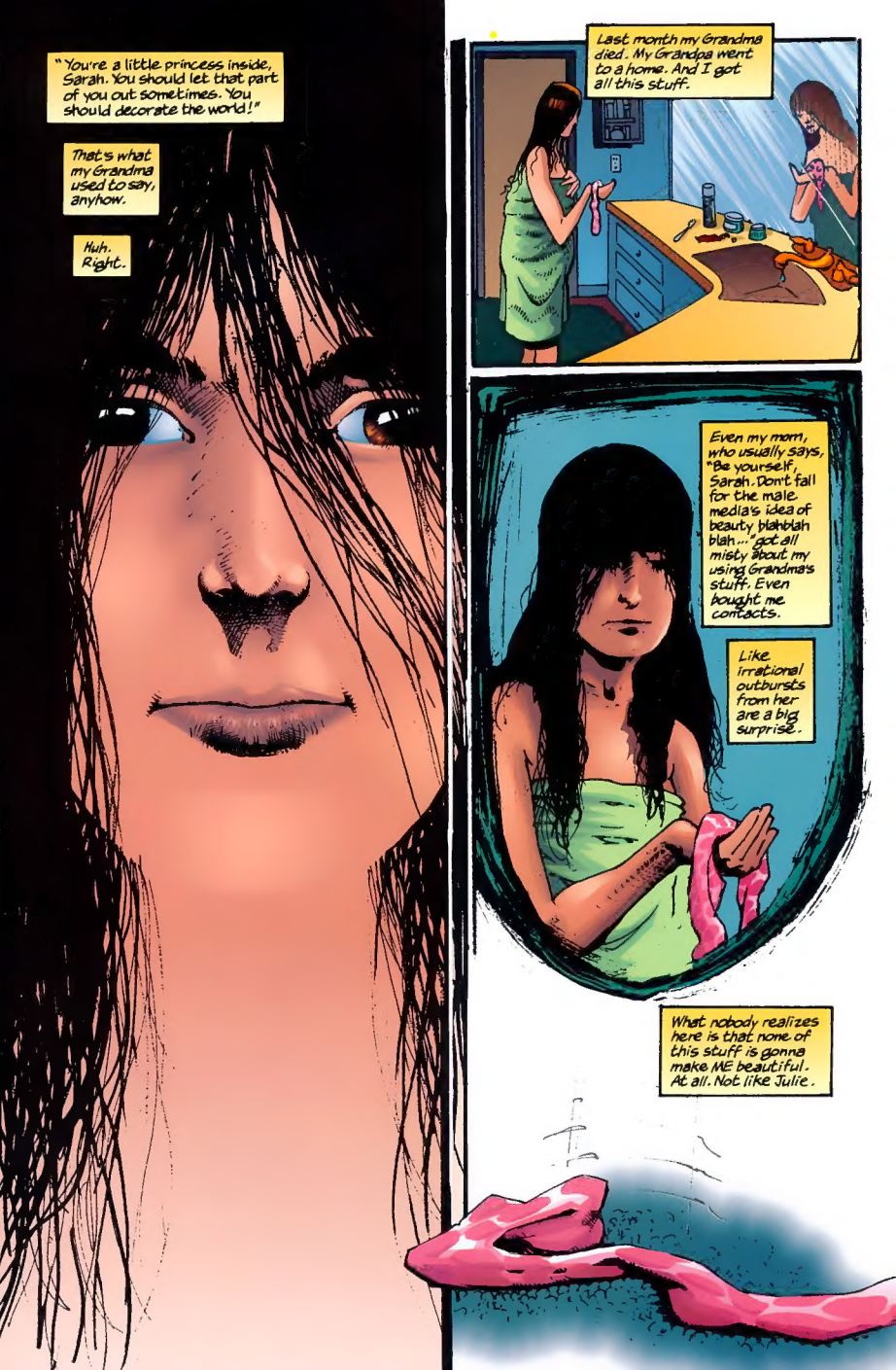
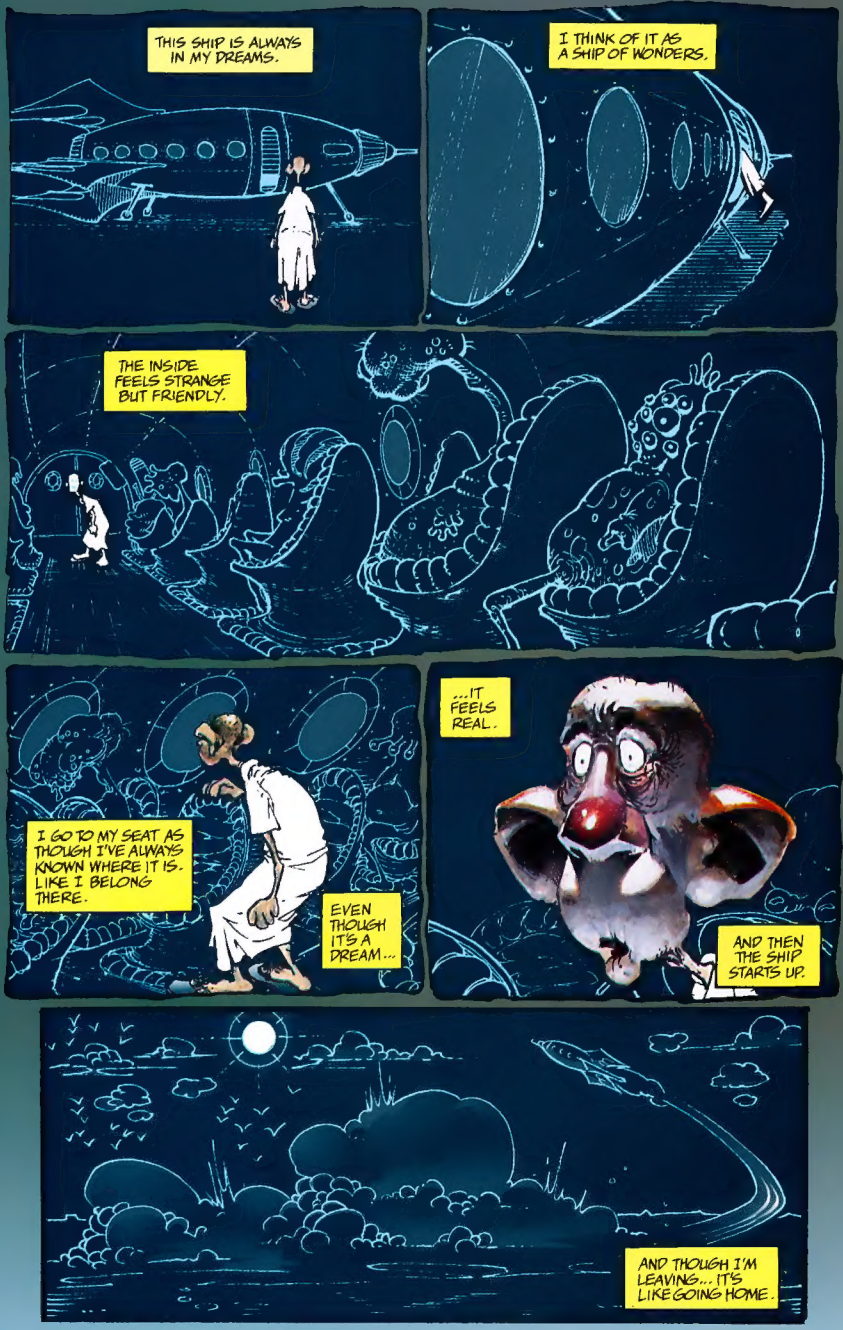
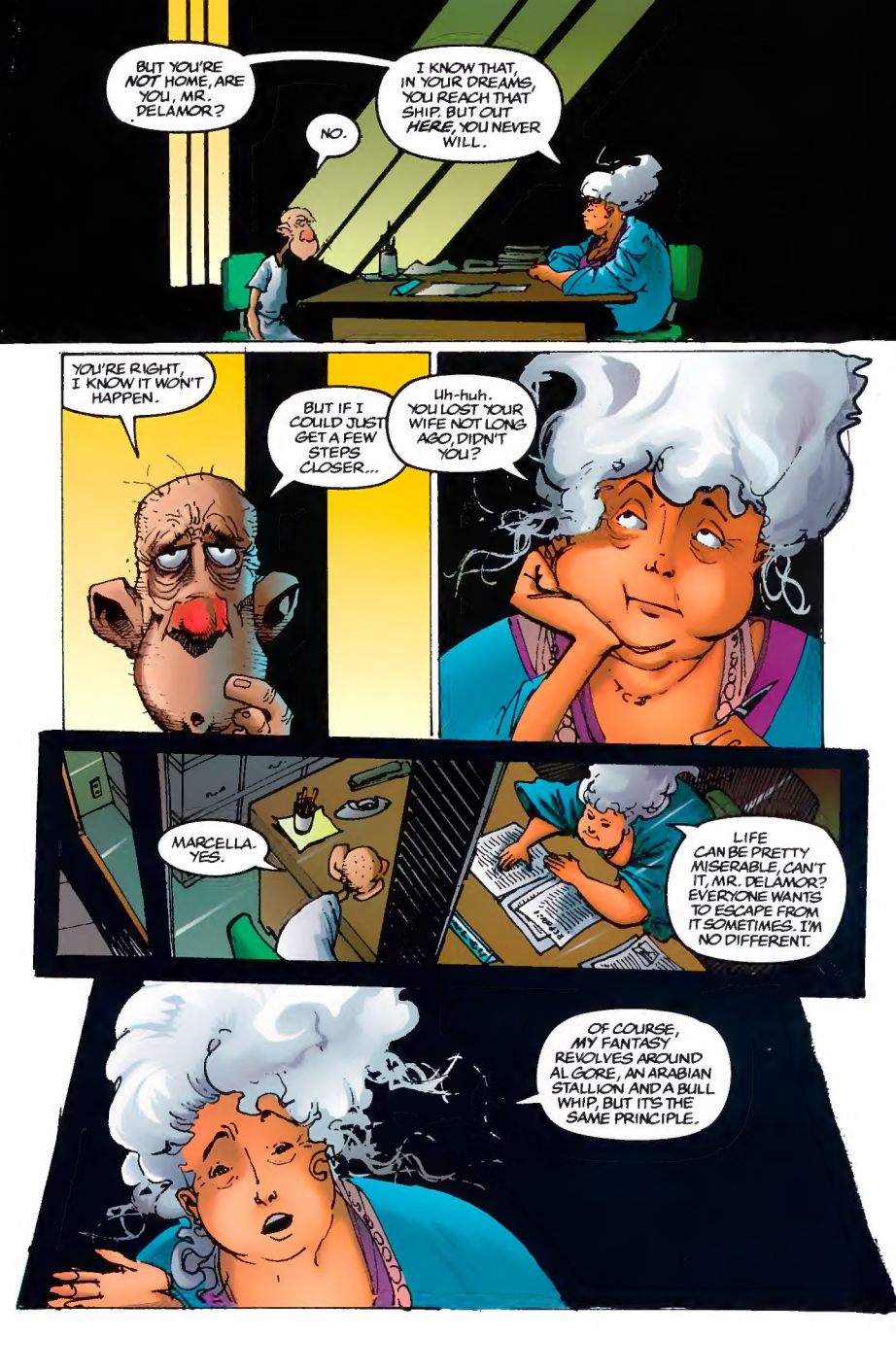



"You're a little princess inside, Sarah. You should let that part of you out sometimes. You should decorate the world!"
That's what my Grandma used to say, anyhow.
Huh. Right.
Last month my Grandma died. My Grandpa went to a home. And I got all this stuff.
Even my mom, who usually says, "Be yourself, Sarah. Don't fall for the male media's idea of beauty blahblah blah..." got all misty about my using Grandma's stuff. Even bought me contacts.
Like irrational outbursts from her are a big surprise.
What nobody realizes here is that none of this stuff is gonna make ME beautiful. At all. Not like Julie.

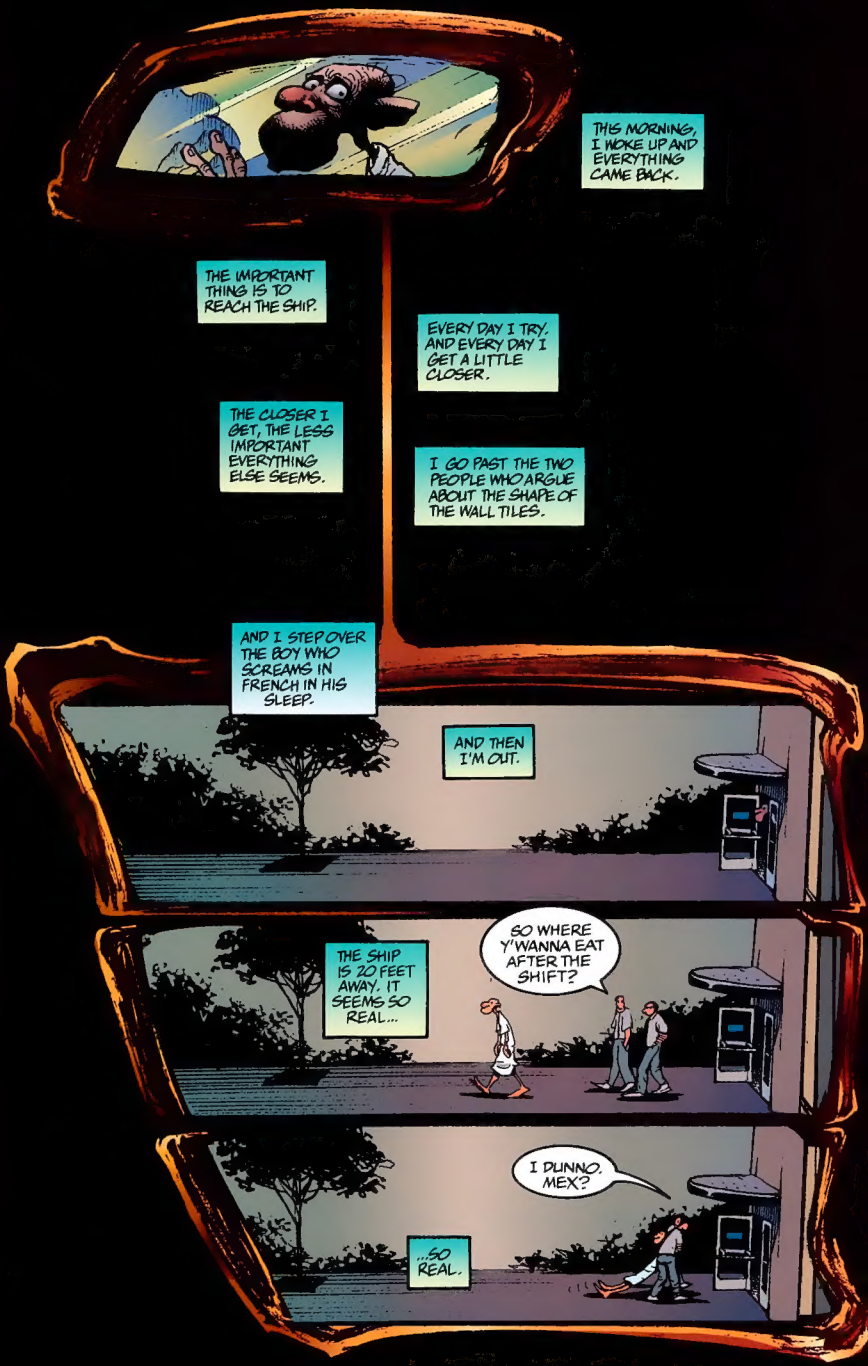

THIS SHIP IS ALWAYS IN MY DREAMS.
I THINK OF IT AS A SHIP OF WONDERS.
THE INSIDE FEELS STRANGE BUT FRIENDLY.
I GO TO MY SEAT AS THOUGH I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN WHERE IT IS. LIKE I BELONG THERE.
EVEN THOUGH IT'S A DREAM...
...IT FEELS REAL.
AND THEN THE SHIP STARTS UP.
AND THOUGH I'M LEAVING... IT'S LIKE GOING HOME.

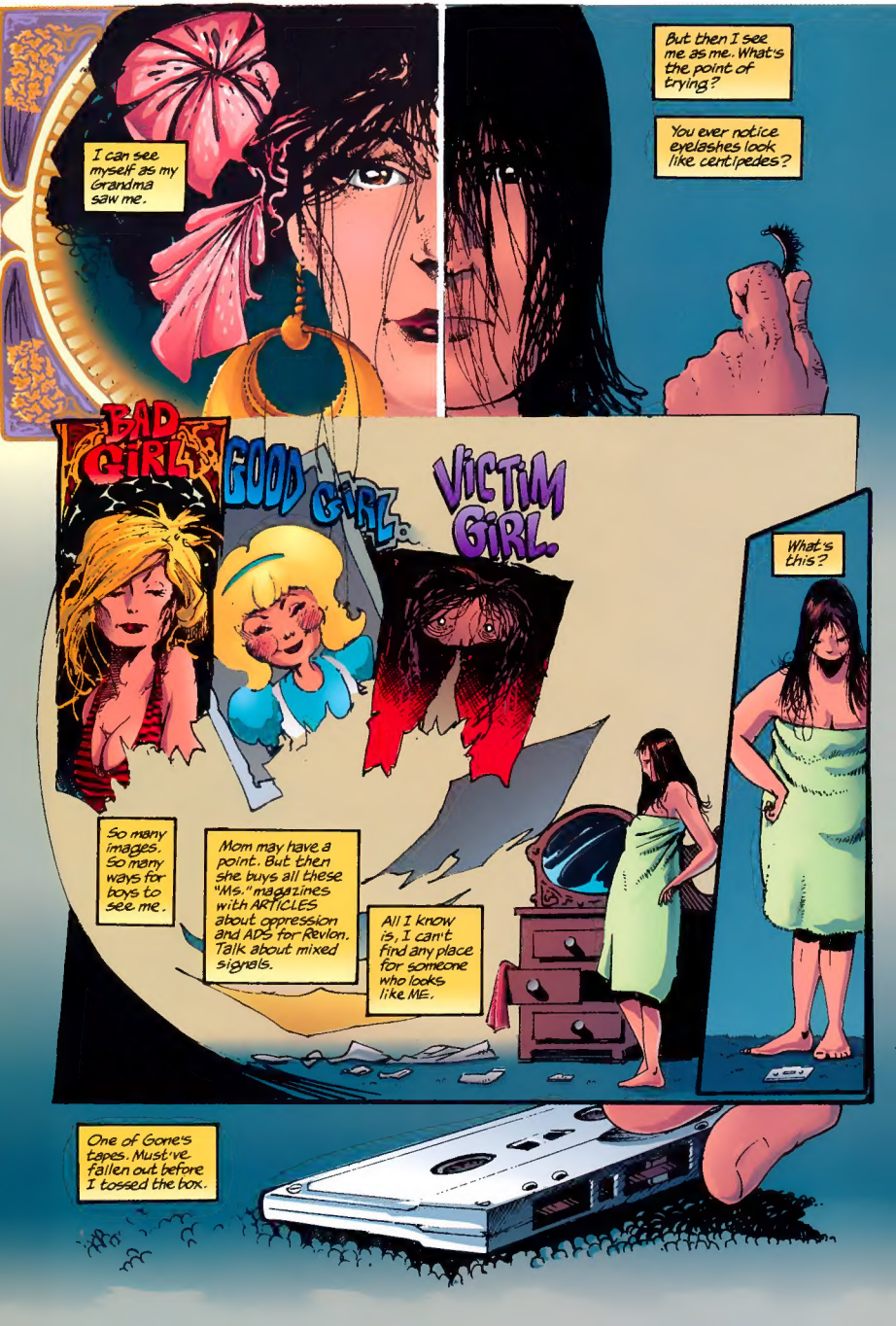

BUT YOU'RE NOT HOME, ARE YOU, MR. DELAMOR?
NO.
I KNOW THAT, IN YOUR DREAMS, YOU REACH THAT SHIP. BUT OUT HERE, YOU NEVER WILL.
YOU'RE RIGHT, I KNOW IT WON'T HAPPEN.
BUT IF I COULD JUST GET A FEW STEPS CLOSER...
Uh-huh. YOU LOST YOUR WIFE NOT LONG AGO, DIDN'T YOU?
MARCELLA.
YES.
LIFE CAN BE PRETTY MISERABLE, CAN'T IT, MR. DELAMOR? EVERYONE WANTS TO ESCAPE FROM IT SOMETIMES. I'M NO DIFFERENT.
OF COURSE, MY FANTASY REVOLVES AROUND AL GORE, AN ARABIAN STALLION AND A BULL WHIP, BUT ITS THE SAME PRINCIPLE.

I THINK YOU THINK IF YOU'RE NUTS THAT YOU WON'T HAVE TO LEAVE. THAT YOU'LL BE SAFE.
BUT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN DECIDE WHEN YOU HAVE TO LEAVE.
I'M SORRY, YOU'RE RIGHT... I KNOW, I KNOW...

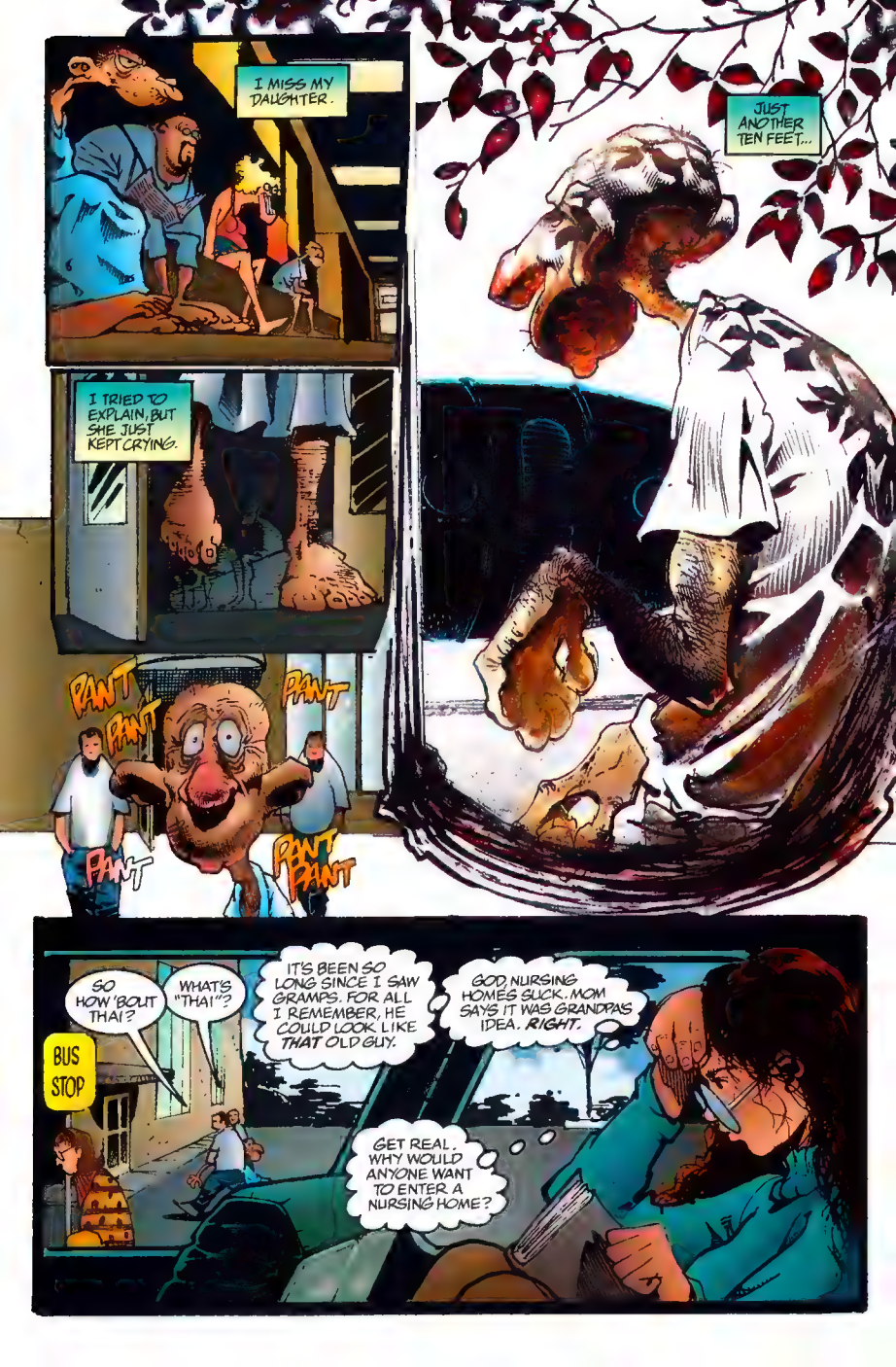
I'M NOT SAYING YOU'RE LYING. I THINK YOU HONESTLY SEE RE-CYCLED 1950'S HORROR FLICKS RUNNING THROUGH YOUR HEAD, AND SO YOU THINK YOU STILL NEED TO BE HERE. BUT YOU DON'T. EVERYBODY HAS A MOVIE IN THEIR HEAD.
NO, I DON'T THINK YOU DO, OR YOU WOULDN'T STILL BE CHASING SPACESHIPS.

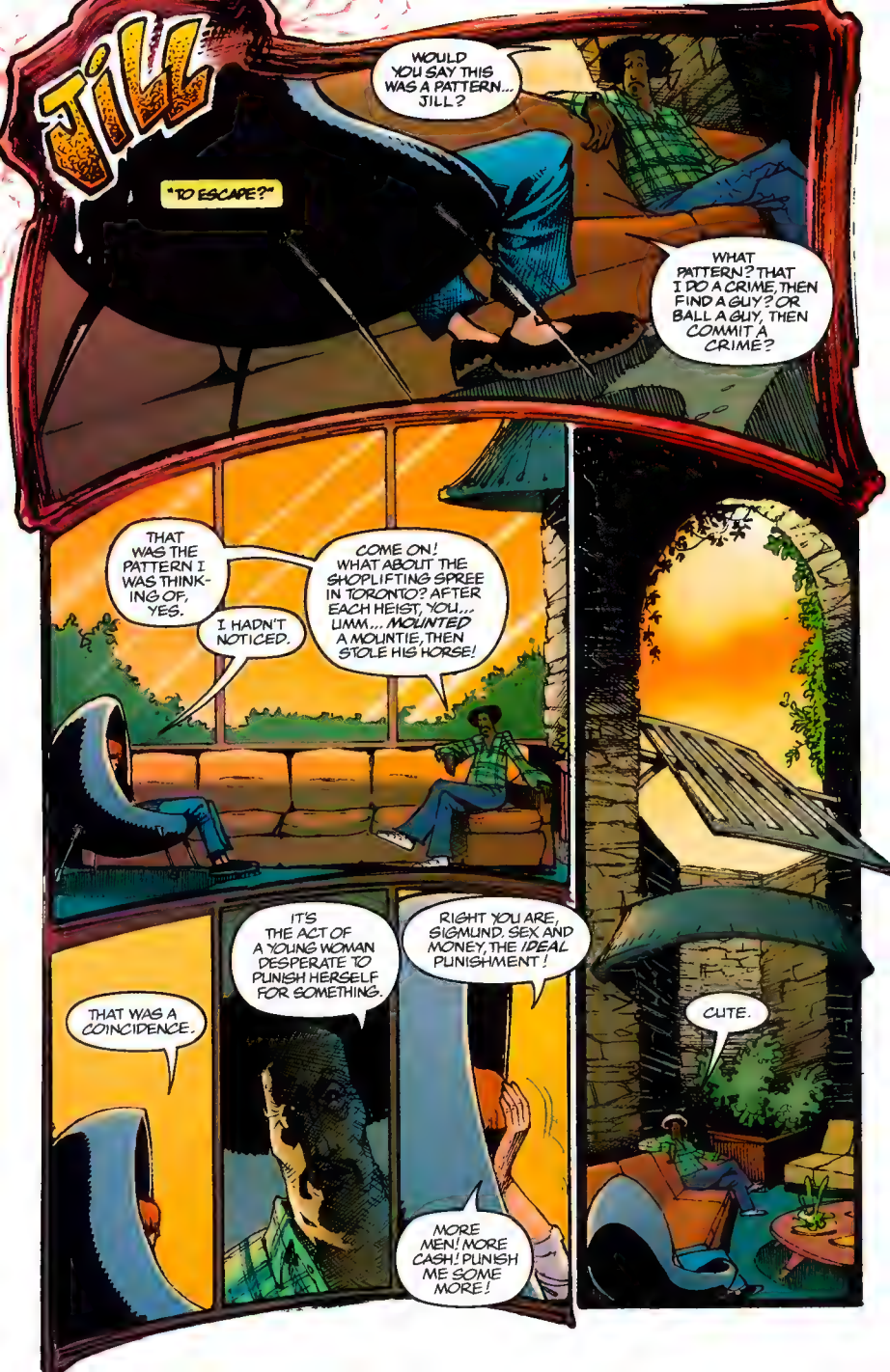
JILL
EVERYTHING WENT PRETTY WELL FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS AFTER I STOLE THE CAR.
I MET THESE TWO GUYS IN TAOS AND GAVE THEM SOMETHING TO TELL THEIR GRANDKIDS ABOUT. MAYBE NOT.
Then I hit somebody in a thunderstorm. And I was screaming, crying over the body...
When I realized it WASN'T raining, and this wasn't a body. It was a Christmas tree.
And then some backpacker came up behind me, and offered help.
Somebody nice.
I don't think we reward nice people often enough, do you?

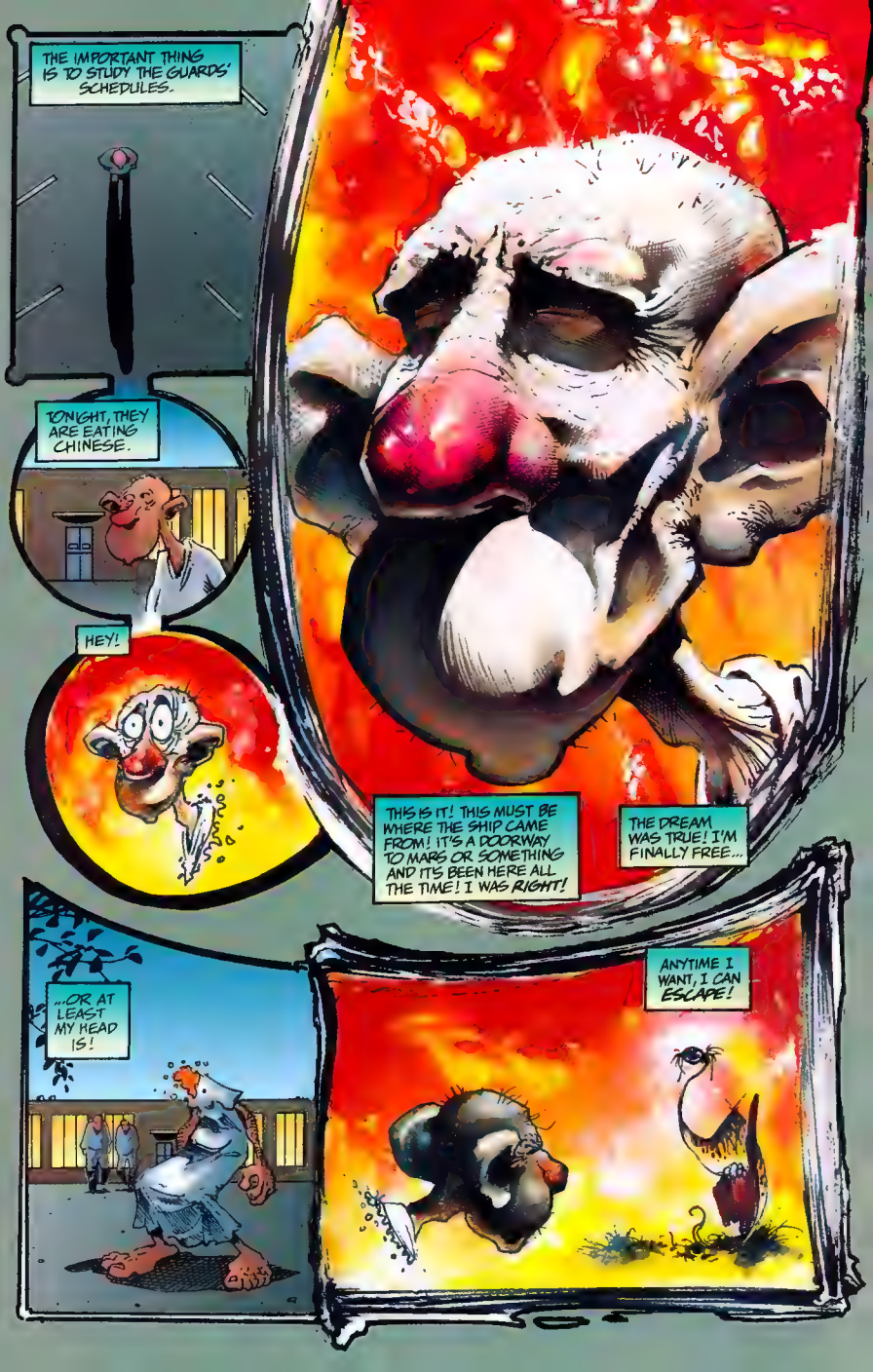

THIS MORNING, I WOKE UP AND EVERYTHING CAME BACK.
THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO REACH THE SHIP.
EVERY DAY I TRY. AND EVERY DAY I GET A LITTLE CLOSER.
THE CLOSER I GET, THE LESS IMPORTANT EVERYTHING ELSE SEEMS.
I GO PAST THE TWO PEOPLE WHO ARGUE ABOUT THE SHAPE OF THE WALL TILES.
AND I STEP OVER THE BOY WHO SCREAMS IN FRENCH IN HIS SLEEP.
AND THEN I'M OUT.
THE SHIP IS 20 FEET AWAY. IT SEEMS SO REAL...
SO WHERE Y'WANNA EAT AFTER THE SHIFT?
I DUNNO. MEX?
...SO REAL.


I can see myself as my Grandma saw me.
But then I see me as me. What's the point of trying?
You ever notice eyelashes look like centipedes?
BAD GIRL
GOOD GIRL
VICTIM GIRL
What's this?
So many images. So many ways for boys to see me.
Mom may have a point. But then she buys all these "Ms." magazines with ARTICLES about oppression and ADS for Revlon. Talk about mixed signals.
All I know is, I can't find any place for someone who looks like ME.
One of Gonie's tapes. Must've fallen out before I tossed the box.

NO, MRS. JAMES. YOUR FATHER IS FINE. HE'S MAKING GREAT PROGRESS.
I JUST FEEL...SO GRODY, Y'KNOW. I FEEL LIKE I SOLD HIM OUT.
I SPENT MY LIFE TRYING TO REBEL AGAINST MOM. NOW SHE'S GONE.
PLEASE KNOCK
CALL MOON CHILD
I JUST CAN'T LOOK AFTER HIM AND SARAH TOO.
PERFECTLY UNDERSTANDABLE. BUT REMEMBER, HE'S THE ONE WHO CHECKED HIMSELF IN. NOBODY BLAMES YOU.


I MISS MY DAUGHTER.
I TRIED TO EXPLAIN, BUT SHE JUST KEPT CRYING.
JUST ANOTHER TEN FEET...
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
BUS STOP
SO HOW 'BOUT THAI?
WHAT'S "THAI"?
IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I SAW GRAMPS. FOR ALL I REMEMBER, HE COULD LOOK LIKE THAT OLD GUY.
GOD, NURSING HOMES SUCK. MOM SAYS IT WAS GRANDPA'S IDEA. RIGHT.
GET REAL. WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO ENTER A NURSING HOME?


JILL
"TO ESCAPE?"
WOULD YOU SAY THIS WAS A PATTERN... JILL?
WHAT PATTERN? THAT I DO A CRIME, THEN FIND A GUY? OR BALL A GUY, THEN COMMIT A CRIME?
THAT WAS THE PATTERN I WAS THINKING OF, YES.
I HADN'T NOTICED.
COME ON! WHAT ABOUT THE SHOPLIFTING SPREE IN TORONTO? AFTER EACH HEIST, YOU... UMM... MOUNTED A MOUNTIE, THEN STOLE HIS HORSE!
CUTE.
THAT WAS A COINCIDENCE.
IT'S THE ACT OF A YOUNG WOMAN DESPERATE TO PUNISH HERSELF FOR SOMETHING.
RIGHT YOU ARE, SIGMUND. SEX AND MONEY, THE IDEAL PUNISHMENT!
MORE MEN! MORE CASH! PUNISH ME SOME MORE!


THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO STUDY THE GUARDS' SCHEDULES.
TONIGHT, THEY ARE EATING CHINESE.
HEY!
THIS IS IT! THIS MUST BE WHERE THE SHIP CAME FROM! IT'S A DOORWAY TO MARS OR SOMETHING AND IT'S BEEN HERE ALL THE TIME! I WAS RIGHT!
THE DREAM WAS TRUE! I'M FINALLY FREE...
...OR AT LEAST MY HEAD IS!
ANYTIME I WANT, I CAN ESCAPE!

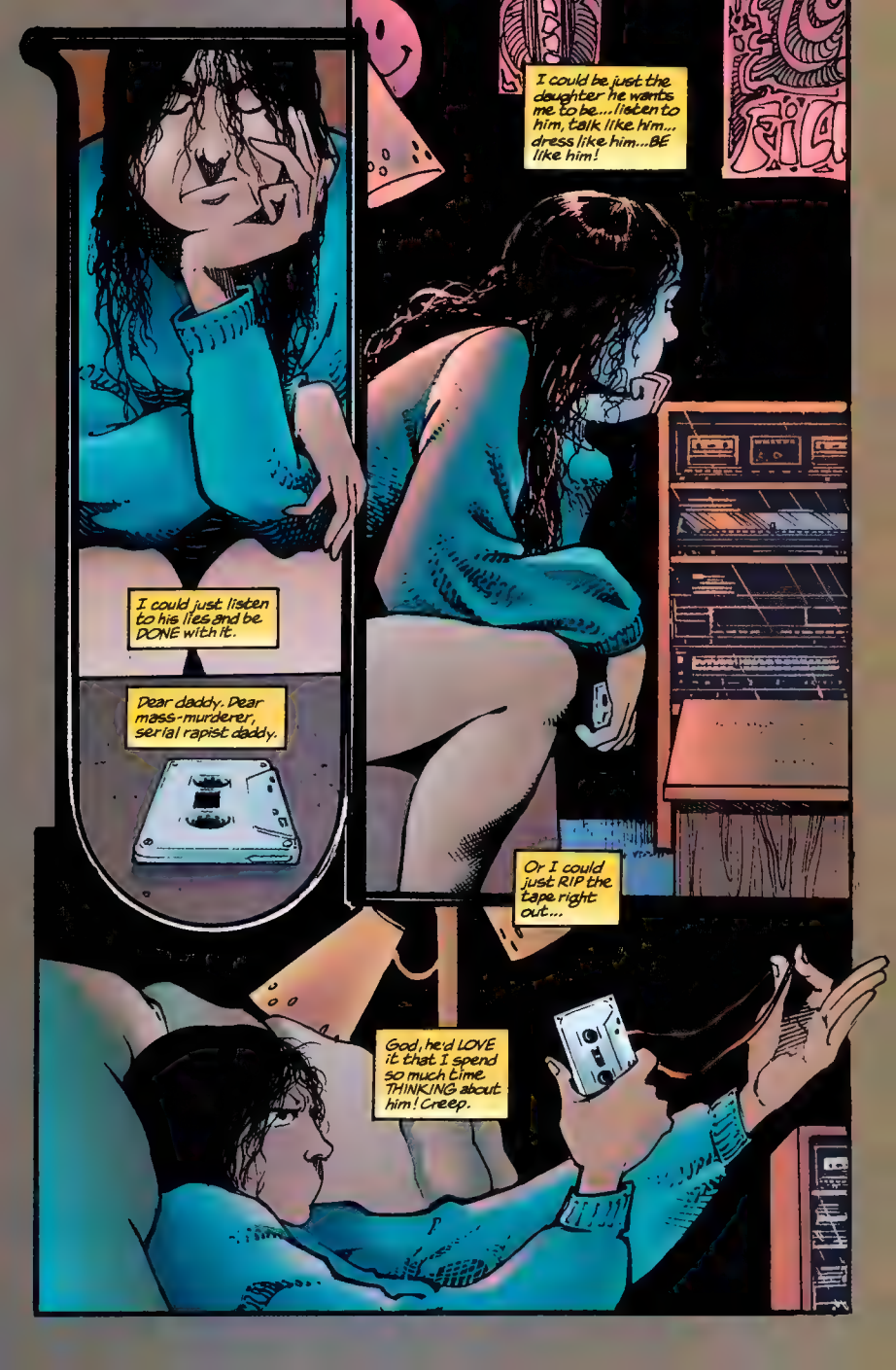
I'LL SHOW 'EM! I'LL FORCE MY WAY THROUGH. I'LL VANISH AND LEAVE THIS PAINFUL, ROTTEN WORLD!

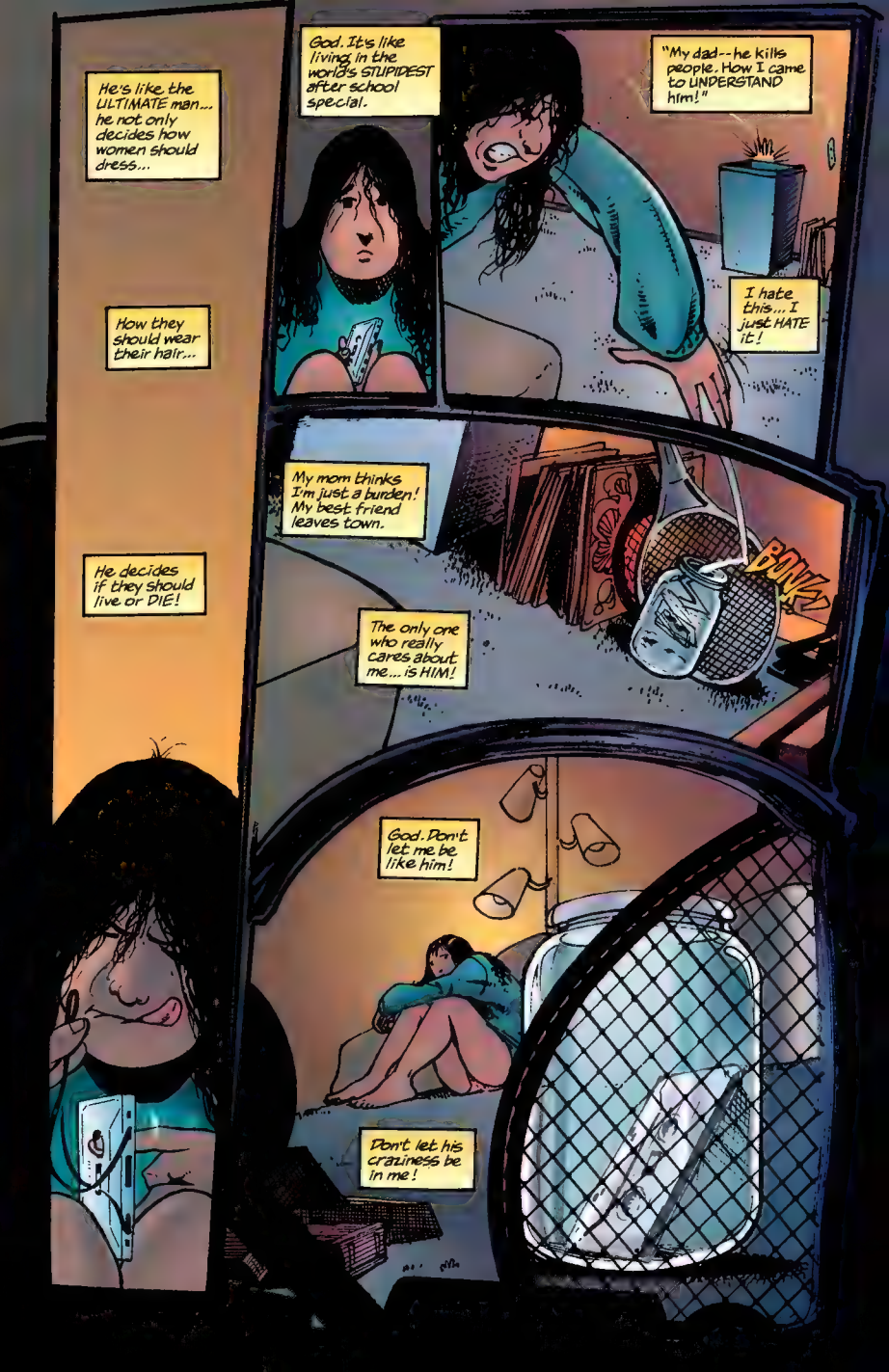
I'LL FINALLY BE FREE!

FREE OF...

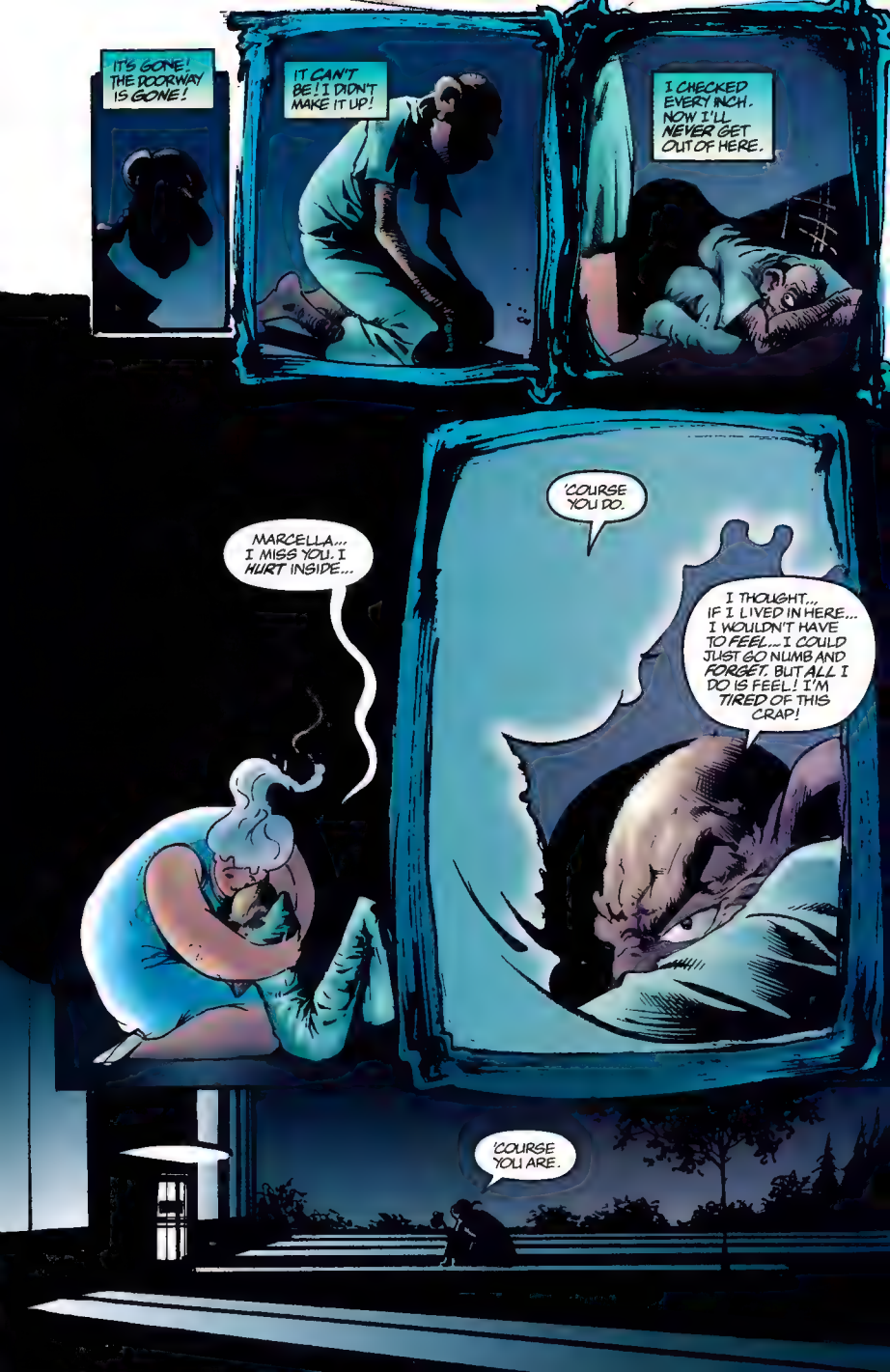
WOOOOOOURRP!

...REALITY.

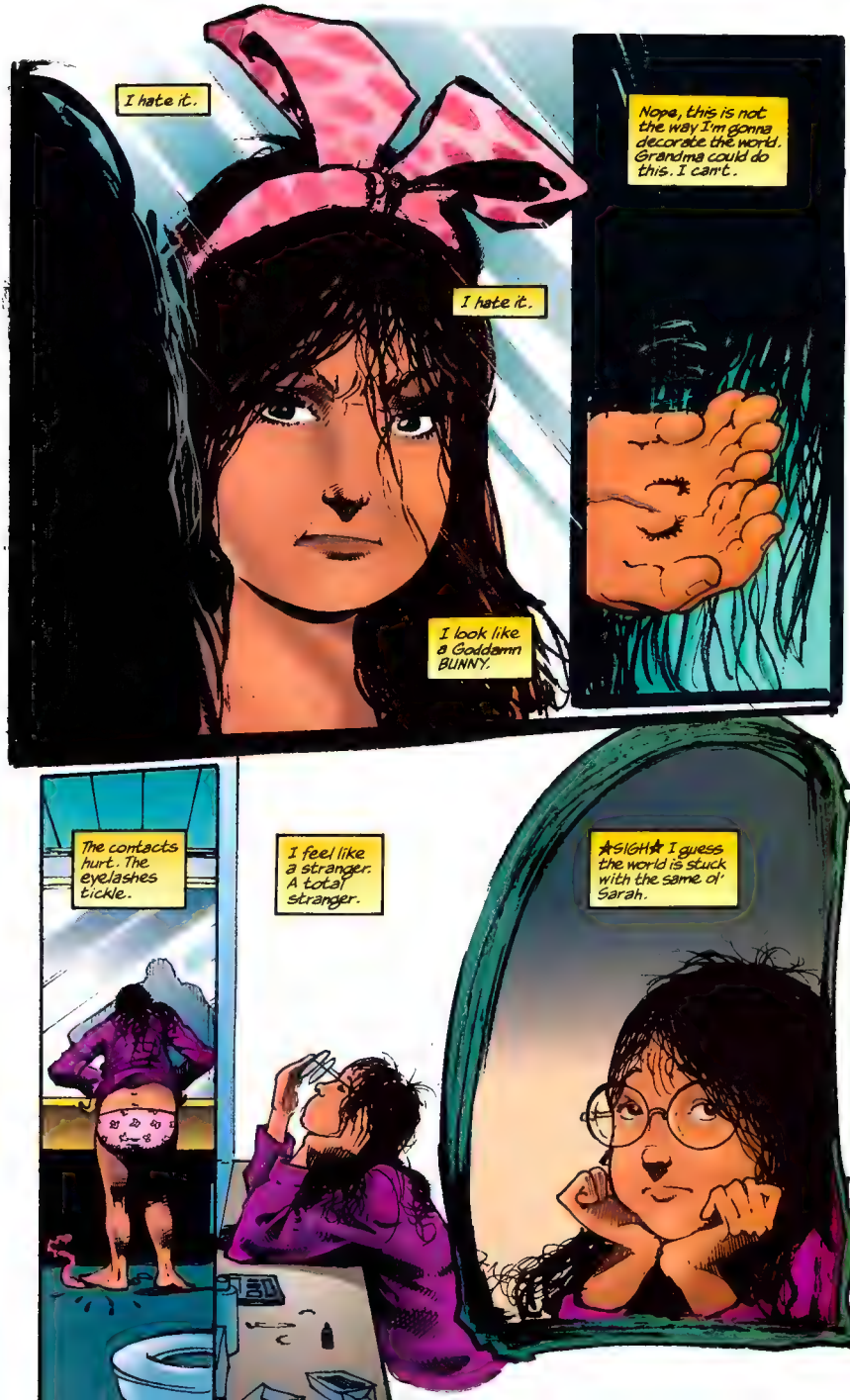

I could be just the daughter he wants me to be... listen to him, talk like him... dress like him... BE like him!
I could just listen to his lies and be DONE with it.
Dear daddy. Dear mass-murderer, serial rapist daddy.
Or I could just RIP the tape right out...
God, he'd LOVE it that I spend so much time THINKING about him! Creep.

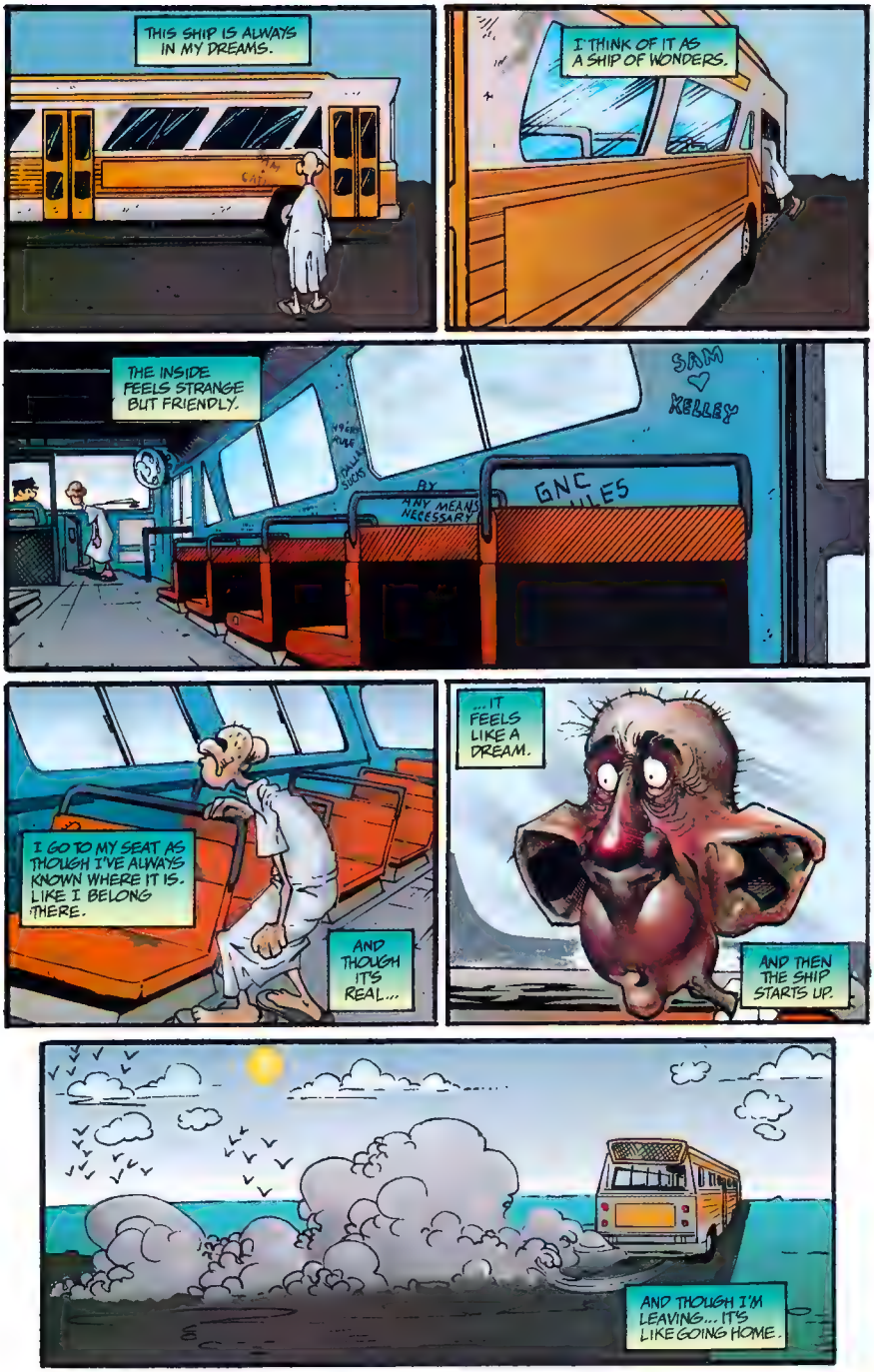

He's like the ULTIMATE man... he not only decides how women should dress...
How they should wear their hair...
He decides if they should live or DIE!
God. It's like living in the world's STUPIDEST after school special.
"My dad--he kills people. How I came to UNDERSTAND him!"
I hate this... I just HATE it!
My mom thinks I'm just a burden! My best friend leaves town.
BONK
The only one who really cares about me... is HIM!
God. Don't let me be like him!
Don't let his craziness be in me!

AT LAST! THE GUARDS ARE GONE!
I'VE WAITED ALL DAY, BUT I CAN FINALLY SLIP THROUGH THAT WINDOW INTO THE OTHER WORLD...
IT'S EXACTLY 14 PACES!
1-2-3-
4-5-6-
7-8-9-
10-11-
12-13-
14-
15-
16...
NO!


IT'S GONE! THE DOORWAY IS GONE!
IT CAN'T BE! I DIDN'T MAKE IT UP!
I CHECKED EVERY INCH. NOW I'LL NEVER GET OUT OF HERE.
'COURSE YOU DO.
I THOUGHT... IF I LIVED IN HERE... I WOULDN'T HAVE TO FEEL... I COULD JUST GO NUMB AND FORGET. BUT ALL I DO IS FEEL! I'M TIRED OF THIS CRAP!
MARCELLA... I MISS YOU. I HURT INSIDE...
'COURSE YOU ARE.

THE BUS IS HERE.
I KNOW. I HAD THE ORDERLY PUT YOUR BAGS ON BOARD.
HE GAVE YOU SOME BURRITOS AND EGG ROLLS FOR THE TRIP.
GOOD.
YOU'VE BEEN A FRIEND.
WRITE ME WHEN YOU GET TO MARS.
NOT REALLY. SHE WOULD HAVE WANTED TO BE ALIVE.
MARCELLA IS ON MARS. I'M STAYING HERE FOR A WHILE.
EMMET? MARCELLA WOULD HAVE WANTED IT THIS WAY.


I hate it.
I hate it.
I look like a Goddamn BUNNY.
Nope, this is not the way I'm gonna decorate the world. Grandma could do this. I can't.
The contacts hurt. The eyelashes tickle.
I feel like a stranger. A total stranger.
SIGH I guess the world is stuck with the same ol' Sarah.


THIS SHIP IS ALWAYS IN MY DREAMS.
I THINK OF IT AS A SHIP OF WONDERS.
THE INSIDE FEELS STRANGE BUT FRIENDLY.
SAM ♡ KELLEY
BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY
I GO TO MY SEAT AS THOUGH I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN WHERE IT IS. LIKE I BELONG THERE.
AND THOUGH IT'S REAL...
...IT FEELS LIKE A DREAM.
AND THEN THE SHIP STARTS UP.
AND THOUGH I'M LEAVING... IT'S LIKE GOING HOME.

The last page of Issue #12 got left off, probably confusing folks who read our response to Jeff Tutt in Maxx Traxx. That missing page will be the first page of Issue #14. That was Jasper's hand that grew old and fell off on page one of Issue #12, by the way. It grew old because time goes faster in the outback. To find out how it came off, see next issue.

In Issue #11, I *told* everybody I was gonna take two months off, but nobody listened. Everybody thought we were cancelled. So LISTEN UP: for three issues (December, January, February) we'll be on time, then there will be NO Maxx comic in March, just the trade paperback of Issues #1-6. Then three more issues will come out (April, May, June). This is a bold prediction, but I think we can do it.

We were afraid the letter column might be getting boring, so we decided to start by talking about

SEX!!!

Dear Sam,

Why haven't we seen The Maxx have sex yet, I mean he is a rabbit. That reminds me, whatever happened to that blow-up doll from Issue #2. I just want to say that you're one sick bastard, you need help.

Quite simply,

Don Jensen

Blow-up doll? And Im a sick bastard? Gee—now I wish I *had* made it a blow-up doll...

Hey Sam,

If everything in Pangaea is a plant, how can I get some Julie seeds?

Erik Olson

Chino Hills, CA

Excuse me?

Sam Kieth,

I would guess that the stalking beast that Julie kills with a spear is her sexuality. Looks like sexuality to me. Mr. Gone is there, but he's very small.

I like the way Maxx talks when he's small—at least there, running around with Pitt. Don't listen to all these people saying, "Ah, what the hell are ya doin' Sam?" because it *means* something that The Maxx talks different. It means a mentality shift.

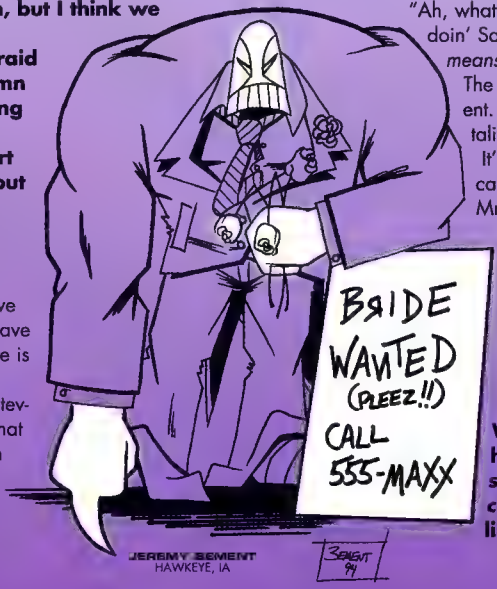
It's downright education you attempt, Mr. Kieth, and I think you are succeeding. Thanks for the great read.

One of many readers,

Joe Cook

Sumas, WA

Wait'll you hear him talk small in the *cartoon*—not like The



Chipmunks, but like he inhaled helium. Everyone else thought it was too goofy, but it made me laugh, so we kept it.

OK, you lost. Now send me my cover.

Dear Sammy,

As pertains to Matthew Kelly's letter in Maxx Traxx of Issue #10, I have to say: Yes Red Lobster!!!!" One of the first comic books I ever read (an *Amazing Spiderman*—sorry) was in a Red Lobster, waiting for the food to arrive, lo those many years ago.

Your good buddy,
Tim Wegner
Des Plaines, IL

This Red Lobster thing is gaining almost mythical status. It's gonna have to be the backdrop for a Maxx-Julie-Sarah scene in a future issue.

Dear Mr. Kieth,

I'm willing to bet a signed Maxx #1 glow-in-the-dark cover that this letter won't be printed in your letter column. I'll allow 3 to 8 weeks for delivery.

Have a nice day,
Clayton Daffron
Battle Ground, WA

Dear Mr. Sam,

Why does everybody say that The Maxx is a rabbi? I didn't realize that there was a Jewish superhero out there. Will candy from the Maxx Pezz dispenser taste like toast?

Christopher Grillo
Moore, OK

Dear Mr. Kieth,

Is Maxx a big purple rabbit? My brother Seth says he is! He says Maxx is and that's why in his first appearance his name is Max the Hare. Is this true? I mean about Maxx being a hare? Seth also says that's why he has big feet. I want to know! Please tell me.

Jay Coutts
Brookville, MD

If I tell you, you'll stop reading. If I *don't* tell you, it'll piss you off. What to do? Peter David once said that fans want something right up until the minute you give it to them. (I'm probably misquoting, and I *know* I'm gonna regret mentioning Peter David. . .)
I think it's about time for a stream-of-consciousness letter:

HELLO KIETH HEAD!!,

Here I am sitting around waiting. Waiting for Maxx. waiting for #12, waiting for the cartoon, waiting for my local Stater Brothers to restock their Pez shelf. . .while we're on the subject of Pez, it's so weird Maxx has achieved a sort of cult-like following around here. What I mean is, I was serious about the Pez. it's that big. I don't know how they eat it all—it's almost always all gone before they get more. Well, enough butt-kissing. If you stop after issue 20 it'll ruin my life. You can't stop! You and

ROGER "BOULIE" SMEETS
HOLLAND

Bill are geniuses!..(so I lied about the butt-kissing). Hey? why the bars at the top of the cover to issue 11? You can't see where it says "BONE" (I know it does cuz I got that cartoon promotional poster). Oh yeah! I almost forgot: WHY THE HELL DON'T YOU GO TO THE SAN DIEGO COMICON?!?!? You let all your fans down! Please please come this year! I love meeting the people who do the comics I love so much! Somebody at the image booth said you were shy. Is that true? Are you rich cause you do Maxx? By the way, can I still get Maxximum Sound? And if so where? (I already got me one o' them glow in the dark #1's). I really enjoyed issue-
MEOW MEOW MEOW
MEOW MEOW MEOW
MEOW MEOW MEOW
MEOW MEOW MEOW
MEOW MEOW MEOW
MEOW MEOW MEOW
MEOW MEOW MEOW
MEOW MEOW MEOW that's enough of that. Sorry R.A.S. (random act of stupidity). Well I forgot what I was going to say so I guess I should end this.

Fruitfully,
Ron (god of dumbness) Bauerle
8681 Avalon Ct.
Alta Loma, California 91701

Ewwww! Okay, you mean to say that Mr. Gone's head is in Julie's apartment, alive, and listening to their every word? I love this comic. . .

Your reader,
Adam E.
Columbus, OH

I know I should have printed this letter sooner, right after the issue came out, but I couldn't resist using a letter that started with Ewwww!

Dear Sam,

I think it's pretty cool how you turned the background of the cover of The Maxx #9 into one of the 3-D picture thingies that you can never see what the picture is. I won't tell you guys what's in the picture though, because it's really cool and I don't want to ruin the surprise for you.

Chris Kane
Green Bay, WI

P.S. Please publish a trade paperback with The Maxx stories from Darker Image #1-4.

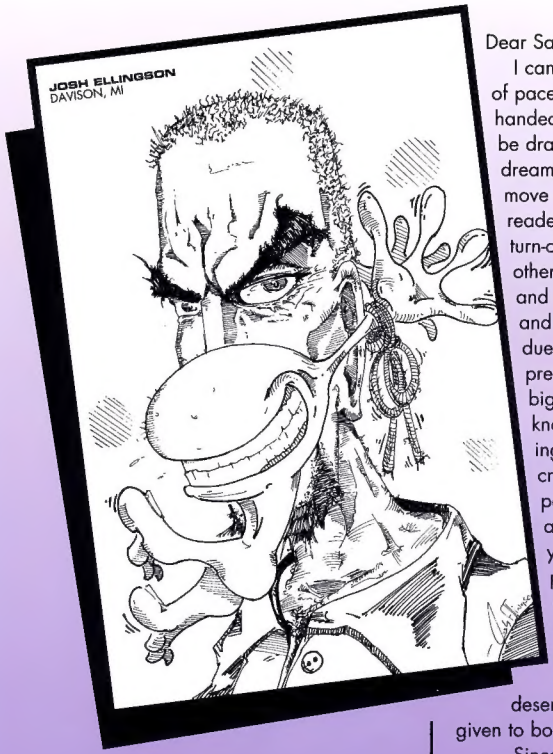
1-4? Ho ho—very funny. I've been staring at that cover for a long time and I don't see it, which is pathetic because I drew it. You've gotta give us a hint. The creators and all the fans wait with bad breath, I mean with baited breath.

Dear Sam,

There are a few things I don't understand.

(1) If the White Isz made it through unchanged, won't other animals get through?

(2) I thought Isz only eat meat



when they come "to the real world," but they almost ate Maxx and Pitt in issue 7 and 8.

Sincerely,
David Briggs
Centereach, N.Y.

(1) I hope so, or I won't have any ideas for future issues.
(2) They drag them down to Mr. Gone's underground lair, where they still might tear them apart, or smother them.

Dear Mr. Isz,

You are the coolest character that has ever inhabited a comic book.

Your biggest fan,
Jim Strange
Royal Oak, MI

I would never presume to answer for an Is. Or two Isz.

Dear Sam,

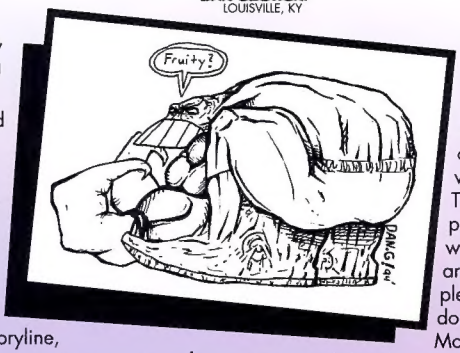
I can't tell you what a nice change of pace it is not to have the story just handed to me in a comic book, but to be drawn into a topsy-turvy world of dreamlike subjectivity. It's a gutsy move on your part, since asking readers to think tends to be a major turn-off in the comics biz. On the other hand, some quality intelligent and oddball comics such as *Bone* and *Madman* have taken off lately due to publicity in the comics press and some good quotes from big-name comic people. I don't know how well *The Maxx* is selling, but I'm surprised that more creators haven't rallied to support it as they have with the aforementioned titles. Maybe you could put out a Maxx trade paperback with some big-name quotes on the back to generate publicity. I mean, surely Gaiman's got to like *The Maxx*. And *The Maxx* does deserve the attention and praise given to books like *Bone* and *Madman*.

Sincerely,
David Farabee
Austin, TX

Appreciate your comments, but let's be fair: these books don't get the big push from distributors that Maxx does, and while the greedy part of me would like everybody to fall off their chairs talking about how great *The Maxx* is, the alternative part of me knows it's not fair to compare us.

Since you mentioned the trade paperback, it's due out in March, including Issues #1-6 and some other cool stuff, like sketchbook pages (write NOW if you don't want sketchbook pages!). By the way, I'm not gonna put the Darker Image story in the TPB because the characters seem so different from what they are now.

DAN GOOWSKI
LOUISVILLE, KY



Dear Sam, Bill, and Jim,

I just finished reading through the first nine issues of *The Maxx*, and things are falling into place. We know that Maxx has a bunny face while in the outback, we can suspect that Mr. Gone will get his head back on and return as a major player in the storyline, and we know that the real world, according to us, is all part of Julie's mind. Does this mean that none of us exist in reality? If this is the case, please let me know so I can stop living a life according to the imprisoning rules of society, not that I obey all of them anyway, but. . .

In Issues #7 and #8, The Maxx, as he appears in the outback, was in the real world fighting a regular sized Is with Pitt, only Maxx and Pitt were teeny tiny. The Maxx of the real world was in the outback with Julie (who were both giants in Pangaea) when a giant Pitt showed up. In the real world, Julie was in the bathroom, hollering at Maxx. How can all three of them exist simultaneously in two different planes of existence?

Confused about my existence,
Tom Litchford
Grand Rapids, MI

This can only be solved at Red Lobster.

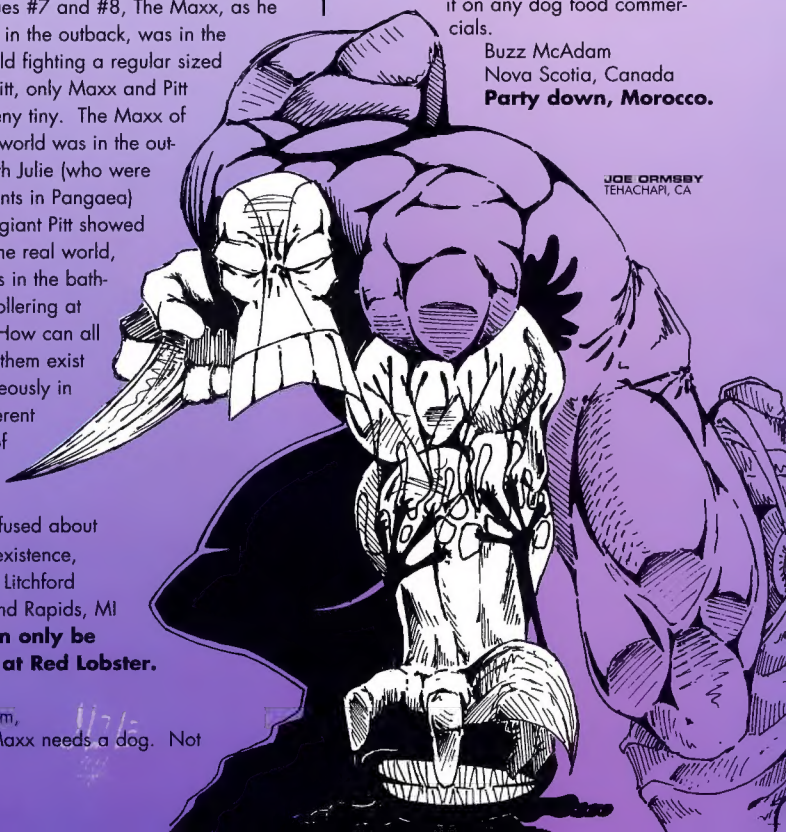
Dear Sam,

The Maxx needs a dog. Not a stupid little sissy dog or a big mean dog. Just an average kind of dog who wants to be The Maxx's pal. People with nice dogs are nicer people. I have a dog named Morocco who's just the type of dog that Maxx should have. He eats Pez and toast, just like The Maxx. Matter of fact, Morocco eats just about anything, except for metal, because it hurts his teeth. Please print this letter so that Morocco can have his five minutes of fame, because he's already six years old and I'm pretty sure he's not going to make it on any dog food commercials.

Buzz McAdam
Nova Scotia, Canada

Party down, Morocco.

JOE ORMSBY
TEHACHAPI, CA



ANDREA MINOSA
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